

From: Lisa Agresti <lisa.agresti@thesimonfoundation.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2016 7:12 PM
To: INSTestimony
Cc: Mark Greenberg; linda greenberg; Chris DuPont; Chris Janelli
Subject: HB 5443 Anti Discrimination Insurance Bill

I am pleased to share a bit of my experience with Breed Discrimination and the resulting fall out that exists in our community. My name is Lisa Agresti and I am the Executive Director of The Simon Foundation, Inc., in Bloomfield, CT. We are a local animal rescue and adoption center for homeless dogs and cats. We work a great deal with people from our community as well as those in the greater New England area in need of assistance. Receiving 50 phone calls on any given day about people needing to surrender their pitbulls or bully breed dogs, isn't unusual. In this day and age, people are losing their homes, losing their jobs, marriages and need to relocate. Add to the chaos the difficulty of trying to find housing that allows pets, but it is almost impossible to find anywhere that hasn't added most large breed dogs to their list of not allowed.

Sometimes the best fit for a family looking to adopt a dog is a wonderful pit mix that has been assessed good with children, and other dogs, sometimes even cats. But due to the fear of not being able to get insurance, or fear of being dropped by their current insurance carrier, has made the adopter walk away from the pet that they connected with and hoped to adopt. Reality is that pitbulls and pit mix dogs are wonderful dogs just as any other breed is. Environmental stimulus and training have a great deal to do with the stability of any dog and this applies to all breeds. We offer canine good citizen training and urge every adopter, especially bully breed adopters to take their dog through classes to certification.

Discrimination is nothing more than ignorance. Each dog, person and situation needs to be assessed and valued individually. Don't insure an aggressive dog, no matter what the breed, and insure the responsible pet owner and their efforts to raise a well balanced canine companion.

Thank you for your consideration. I invite you to call me with any questions and would welcome you to tour our facility where all breeds are welcome!

Sincerely,

Lisa W. Agresti
Executive Director

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